

The Forgotten Demographic

By George Davis

I would like to begin by assuring you that I am not writing this article as one who has fully attained its ideals. I am convinced that most if not all of us fall short in this area. I write in the spirit of 1 Timothy 4:16, believing that, in holding up the truth, both the herald and the hearer will be saved. I write in the spirit of Daniel 9:5, "WE have sinned, and have dealt perversely, and have done wickedly." I do not see myself as one having attained, but as one in pursuit of that for which I have been apprehended.



It is highly unlikely that what you are about to read will ever be heard in any of today's institutional churches. For in it is an expose of an evil mindset that held by many of today's unwary churches without shame or question. If all believers were to fully repent of this evil, the church in its current form, would fall apart and a lot that is called ministry would be discontinued. But not to worry, for in the stripping of this baneful mindset, which is the product of evil motives that subtly counter the life and example of the Lord Jesus Christ, a much more glorious church will emerge. It is in this hope that I write.

James contrasts these evil motives with pure and undefiled worship of God.

"Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world. My brethren, do not hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with partiality ("respect of persons" - KJV). For if there should come into your assembly a man with gold rings, in fine apparel, and there should also come in a poor man in filthy clothes, and you pay attention to the one wearing the fine clothes and say to him, "You sit here in a good place," and say to the poor man, "You stand there," or, "Sit here at my footstool," have you not shown partiality among yourselves, and become judges with evil thoughts (Motives)? Listen, my beloved brethren: Has God not chosen the poor of this world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom..." (James 1:27-2:4, NKJV)

Let's not pass these words lightly! James depicts those that engage in respect of persons as corrupt and prejudiced judges that judge by an untrue standard, which

springs from their evil thoughts or motives. These evil motives are manifest in a partiality or respect of persons that esteems the wealthy and devalues the poor.

When one shows favoritism he is motivated by evil ambitions that are in every way antagonistic to the Spirit of Christ. It is for this reason that James exhorts us to hold the precious faith of our Lord without partiality. To do otherwise is to live a life of hypocrisy that dishonors His Spirit, faith and example.

Perhaps you are asking, what is respect of persons? And what are the evil motives lurking behind such inequity

Thinking too highly of men (1 Corinthians 4:6) is certainly evil, but respect of persons is not just about unduly elevating men, although this certainly is part of it. It is also about devaluing men. It is saying to the beautiful person, "sit here in the seat of honor," and to the uncomely ones, "you stand over there, out of sight or sit at my footstool, as my fawning servant." It is about flattering for personal advantage. If anyone is perceived as having nothing to contribute, they become expendable and are treated with fewer honors. The man or woman with the golden rings and the fine clothes is more highly valued and asked to take seats of honor because of hope that their wealth might find its way into the church coffer. I have seen this inequity acted out many times in many ways, but without question, the most dramatic and graphic display of favoritism in Christendom today is seen in the area of ministry demographics, i.e., those that we choose to minister to. In that regard the old proverb holds true, "The poor person is shunned even by his own neighbor, but the rich person has many friends" (Proverbs 14:20). In other words, everybody wants to build a church in Beverly Hills but nobody wants to go to skid row.

The contemporary concept of the professional minister requires a big ministry base, especially when you consider the large overhead involved in acquiring and maintaining even a modest expression of what is today considered "Church" and "ministry." There is the church building, the monthly outlay to maintain the church building, the programs, salaries and benefits for the pastor and his staff" and a number of other hidden costs. All this must be financed by tithe-payers. The pressure on such professionals to underwrite their great work often causes them to show special regard to those with the money needed to finance their vision and extravagant lifestyles.

The only example of ministry that Christ left us is that of ministering to the poor. Such a ministry is by its nature draining, requiring a constant giving. It was to this forgotten demographic that the heavenly Father sent His Son to preach the glad tidings and, as James so clearly pointed out in our text, it was the poor that the Father made heirs of the Kingdom. We have no example of Christ targeting the rich for ministry.

It has always been God's plan that there should be no poor among His people. (See Deuteronomy 15:4). Yet we read in Deuteronomy 15:11, "The poor will never cease out of the land." This is because the poor were and always will be a test of obedience. How is it that there would be no more poor people and yet the poor would never cease out of the land? This was to be realized through the constant obedience of those who have in giving to those who do not have. In that constant obedience none are left destitute. No one misses a meal. Some are dependent, but they are no longer needy. And those with wealth are held accountable before God for the care of the needy.

God's pity on a poor and oppressed people was and is foundational to the faith. It was also central to the messianic hope. More than any other people, the poor eagerly awaited the coming of Christ because they knew that He was coming to be their Helper and Deliverer. Though they were forgotten and devalued by the great men of the earth, they knew, by prophetic announcement, that Messiah counted them precious.

David prophesied of the ministry of the Christ,

"Yes, all kings shall fall down before him. All nations shall serve him."

David then goes on to give the reasons why kings and nations will serve Christ.

"For he will deliver the needy when he cries; The poor, who has no helper. He will have pity on the poor and needy. He will save the souls of the needy. He will redeem their soul from oppression and violence. Their blood will be precious in his sight" (Psalms 72:11-14).

We see then that ministry to the poor and needy was a messianic sign. The entire nation of Israel, most of whom were poor, waited for such a Messiah. When Mary was informed that she would bear the Christ child, she broke into praise. Even this lowly handmaid knew the nature of the ministry that the child in her womb would one day

perform. "God gives the hungry good things to eat, and sends the rich away with nothing" (Luke 1:53).

While John the Baptist was in Herod's prison, he heard of the works of Christ and sent two of his disciples to ask Jesus, "Are you he who comes, or should we look for another?" Jesus answered John's question by pointing out six signs or miracles that proved that He was the Messiah. "Go and tell John the things which you hear and see: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have good news preached to them" (Matthew 11:2-5).

Like everyone else in Israel, John knew that the true Messiah would have pity on the poor and needy. Jesus was offering John the proof that David said would convince kings and nations to serve Him. More than the miracles themselves, the sign that proved that Jesus was truly the Messiah was that He preached the gospel to the poor. We readily recognize healings and miracles as signs, but how is preaching the gospel to the poor a sign? If the value of a thing is determined by its rarity and a miracle is an amazing or wonderful occurrence, then Christ's act of preaching the gospel to the poor, with no hidden agendas, was as miraculous as it was precious. For the poor were the utterly neglected demographic and for anyone to go and minister strictly to them was a miracle and a sign indeed.

Jesus was not sent to preach the gospel to the rich and famous but to the outcast. He was not building a ministry base by which He could finance fulltime ministry. The Spirit of the Lord had anointed Him to preach the gospel to those who could give Him nothing. He was anointed to preach the gospel to the poor; heal the brokenhearted, preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised (See Luke 4:18, 7:22). This is Christian ministry! It has not changed in the last 2000 years. Jesus commissioned His disciples to continue this very ministry when he told them, "As the Father has sent me, even so I send you" (John 20:21).

If the Spirit that anointed Jesus has anointed us for works of service, then we are called to the same demographic. Here is where the rub comes. Pure and undefiled service to God demands personal contact with the world's pain and sorrow. Yet most of what is called ministry today is ministry by proxy; giving to someone who gives to someone else who finally gives a small portion of what was originally given to the

needy. This is a much more antiseptic way of ministering to the poor, since we can minister long-distance and not be soiled or unduly disturbed by the severity of their need. So rather than visiting the widows and the orphans *in their afflictions* we give from a safe distance. Ministry that is inspired by the Spirit of Christ brings us in touch with the feelings of the infirmities of others. Jesus still wants to minister to the needy directly, through His people.

Paul exhorted the Corinthian believers to abound in this grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, asking them to share in the poverty of the needy.

"For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that you through his poverty might become rich." (2 Corinthians 8:9)

I am confident that Christ is calling all of His disciples to learn what it means to live and minister in the good of 2 Corinthians 8:9. In order to fulfill the law of Christ we must bear the burdens of others--taking on their poverty that they might become rich. Isaiah prophesied of Christ, "Surely he has borne our sickness, and carried our suffering. . .he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought our peace was on him; and by his wounds we are healed" (Isaiah 53:4-5). Christ left the riches of Heaven and came to the ghetto of human need and suffering, there to spend and be spent that others might be rich, not in worldly treasures but in true riches. This is the only example of ministry that Christ left us! Paul spoke of this ministry when he exhorted the Galatian believers to "Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law (custom or rule) of Christ" (Galatians 6:2).

I can find nowhere in Christ's example of ministry anything remotely resembling the clergy of our day. Many of these clergy live in opulence, like kings, aloof from the sorrows and beggarly lives of the throng of adoring little people who desire nothing more than to kiss their ring.

Is this the example of Him who made Himself poor that others might be made rich? Is this the example of Him that bore our sickness, and carried our suffering? Is this the example of Him who was pierced for our iniquities? Is this the example of Him, who said, "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep" (John 10:11)?

Shouldn't the shepherds feed the sheep?

What we see today is something entirely different from what Christ lived during His earthly sojourn. He laid down His life for the sheep. In today's religious systems, the sheep are laying down their lives for shepherds. Seldom do we see the anointing of the Good Shepherd upon the so-called shepherds of our day! Rarely do we see the Spirit of the Lord upon them to fulfill the law of Christ and bear the burdens of the poor and needy in their affliction. Instead we see elaborate sanctuaries, that require a small fortune to maintain, cluttering the skyline. Do today's shepherds feed Christ's lambs or live on mutton?

The Lord put a similar question to the shepherds of Israel, through the prophet Ezekiel, "[Woe to the shepherds of Israel who feed themselves! Shouldn't the shepherds feed the sheep?](#)" (Ezekiel 34:2). Let's get this straight once and for all. Shepherds provide for the sheep, not the sheep for the shepherd!

Jude 1:11-13 is often used by church leaders against those whom they feel are in rebellion against their authority. But upon close examination this is not what this passage addresses at all. In fact it is an indictment against false shepherds.

[Woe to them! For they went in the way of Cain, and ran riotously in the error of Balaam for hire, and perished in Korah's rebellion. These are hidden rocky reefs in your love feasts when they feast with you, shepherds who without fear feed themselves; clouds without water, carried along by winds; autumn leaves without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots; wild waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, for whom the blackness of darkness has been reserved forever. \(WEB, See also ASV\)](#)

Such shepherds are like the Cyclops of Euripides who said of the flocks,

"The earth perforce, whether she like it or not, produces grass and fattens my flocks, which I sacrifice to no one save myself and this belly, the greatest of deities; but to the gods, not I! For surely to eat and drink one's fill from day to day and give oneself no grief at all, this is the king of gods for your wise man . . ."

Follow the Money Trail

Christ was the consummate example. He did not come to be served but to serve and His purse had only one purpose, and that was to meet the needs of others. Unlike many of today's clergy, Jesus wasn't concerned about money. We cannot find one instance where He took up an offering to finance his ministry. What is more, He allowed Judas, whom He knew to be a thief, and who did not care for the poor, to be in charge of the common purse (See John 12:6). He had just that much regard for money.

After the meal in the upper room Jesus knew that the time of His betrayal was at hand. He turned to Judas and said, "What you do, do quickly." (John 13:27) The other disciples didn't understand what Jesus said. They assumed that He was asking Judas to buy what was needed for the feast, or, as they had so often seen Him do, to give something to the poor (John 13:29). Why else would Judas be leaving with the money?

They had seen it so many times. Christ did not come to live off of the people but to give to them--to meet their needs, both monetary and spiritual. He was the good Shepherd who knew that the shepherd should provide for the sheep, not the other way around.

We have an excellent example of this in the feeding of the five thousand. Jesus went up into a mountain, and he sat there with his disciples. He lifted up his eyes and saw a great multitude coming to him. He was moved with compassion for He knew that they were hungry. He turned to Philip, the analytical one, and said, "[Where are we to buy bread, that these may eat?](#)" (John 6:5).

We see the heart of the true and Good Shepherd, who obviously did not believe that it was the responsibility of the multitude to care for His needs but instead assumed the responsibility of feeding this large gathering of people. How different is this from the current belief that the multitudes are responsible to care for the wants and desires of a fattened clergy? This simple question, "where are we to buy bread that these may eat?" defines Christ's ministry--a ministry which He gives to all who follow Him. He did not come to get fat off the sheep. He came as the suffering servant, serving the suffering. He came as the good Shepherd, laying down His life for the flock.

Paul also would not live off of the flock but instead depicted himself as a father caring for his children and, in that figure, he believed it to be unnatural for the children to be the providers. So he refused to be a burden to others but instead worked with his hands that he might have something to give toward their needs. "[Behold, the third time](#)

I am ready to come to you; and I will not be burdensome to you: for I seek not yours but you: for the children ought not to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children. And I will very gladly spend and be spent for you." (2 Corinthians 12:14-15).

Like his Lord, Paul also was ready to spend and be spent for the multitudes with no regard for the wealth or prestige of any. Such integrity is rarely seen today. Instead we see consummate professionals, unashamedly declaring it to be their wage and right to live off of the Christian masses. Let's remember that the word that is translated *ministry* in our English Bibles really means to serve and the word *minister* means servant. These words carry no connotation of office or hierarchy. Unless we are servants, as our Lord was, the reality of these words are harsh indictments against us and ought to prohibit us from so glibly calling ourselves ministers.

A pastor of a large mega-church in our city openly and shamelessly targets, as his demographic, the wealthy Californians that are moving into our area. If we believe that the Church of Christ is an institution, then it must be run like any other corporation and everyone must be a contributor to the bottom line. If they are not they must be made to be so. For if we are going to maintain such extravagant buildings and programs, everyone must chip in--right?

Below is a portion of the annual budget of one such church.

Pastors salary	\$140,000.00
Staff salary	\$40,000.00
Missions	\$300.00
Fireworks.	\$300.00
Benevolence.	\$12.00

With some variations, this statement reflects the priorities of the institutional churches of today. I wonder if they gave the twelve benevolence dollars all at once, or spread it out over a twelve-month period? Did they give it all to one charity or perhaps two or even twelve? At least there is some balance in this financial statement; they gave as much to missions as they did for the purchase of fireworks. One thing is painfully clear as we follow the money trail. Giving to the poor is not a priority and the lion's share of the income goes to the one who is respected and honored above all. No. I am not referring to Christ, for He said, "In as much as you have done it to the least of these, you have done it unto me." We do not give to Christ by giving to the greatest of these,

but by giving to the least. The one that has received the seat of honor in today's institutional church is not Christ, but the pastor. This is clearly demonstrated by the huge honorarium the professional receives as opposed to the few crumbs that fall from his table to the poor and uncomely that sit at his footstool.

Such respect of persons is in direct opposition to "the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory." How long, O God, will we go on holding the faith of your Son, with evil motives? How long can we continue to delude ourselves into believing that we are following in the footsteps of Him who laid down His life for all?

The *Ochlas*

Recently Michael Clark and I met with a dear brother in Christ who works among the incarcerated Native American youth. His name is Bud Heringer.

Bud shared with us how He has found the presence of the Lord among the *ochlas* (the multitude). Now he had our attention! "What in world is the *ochlas*?" We asked in almost perfect unison. Bud replied, "The outcast, the multitudes, the common people, as opposed to the rulers and leading men." He continued to explain that the provision of the Lord is with the *ochlas* and that when he is serving these rejects of our society, he feels the presence of the living Christ. Then he said something that pierced deep into our hearts, "Jesus was among the *ochlas* two thousand years ago and He is still there today!"

You will not find His abiding presence in a holy place on a holy mountain somewhere. You will find Him where you would have found Him had you been in Judea 2000 years ago. You will still find Him on the seashore or in the marketplace. You will find Him wherever that one lost sheep hangs upon the rocky crags of life. Christ is still out among the *ochlas*. He is still asking all who will hear, "Where are we to buy bread, that these may eat?" Do you want to see Jesus? He is out among the *ochlas*. In ministering to them, we minister to Him.

William Booth, the founder of the Salvation Army, had a vision that is very much in keeping with this truth. As he gazed from his carriage window, considering the wretched condition of the multitudes around him, he saw a dark and stormy ocean. In that ocean he saw multitudes of poor human beings struggling and drowning. In this dark angry ocean, he saw "a mighty rock with its summit towering above the black

clouds." Around the base of this great rock he saw a large platform where a number of the poor struggling, drowning wretches climbed out of the ocean to safety. A few of those who were already safe on the platform were helping the poor creatures still in the violent waters to reach the place of safety.

The occupants of the rock were divided into different classes, and they occupied themselves with different pleasures and employments. But only a few of them seemed to make it their business to rescue the suffering. Though each had been rescued from the ocean, the memory of its darkness and danger no longer troubled them at all and they did not have any care for the ones who were struggling and drowning right before their eyes. Many went regularly to hear seminars and sermons in which the awful state of these poor drowning creatures was described.

Mr. Booth described the condition of those on the rock as follows:

"Some of them were absorbed day and night in trading and business in order to store up savings in boxes, shares, and banks. Lots spent their time amusing themselves with growing flowers on the side of the rock, others in painting or in playing music, or in dressing in different fashions and walking about to be admired. Some were occupied chiefly in eating and drinking, others were busy arguing over the poor drowning creatures that had already been rescued.

But what really shocked Booth most was this:

". . .those on the platform to whom He (Christ) called, who heard His voice, and felt they ought to obey it (at least they said they did) those who confessed to love Him, were in full sympathy with Him in the task He had undertaken, who worshipped Him (or who claimed to do so) were so engaged in their trades and professions, their money gathering and pleasures, their families and friends, their theology and arguments about it, and their preparation for going to the Mainland, that they ignored the cry that came to them from He who had Himself gone down into the sea. If they heard it they did not respond. They did not care. And so the multitude continued right before them, struggling, and shrieking, and drowning in the darkness.

And strangest of all, I saw that some of these people on the platform, whom He had called to come and help Him in His difficult task of saving these perishing souls, were always praying and crying out for Him to come to them!

Some wanted Him to come and stay with them, and spend His time and strength in making them happier. Others asked Him to come and take away various doubts and misgivings they had concerning the truth of some letters He had written them. Some wanted Him to come and make them feel more secure on the rock, so secure that they would be sure they should never slip off again into the ocean. Numbers of others wanted Him to make them feel quite certain that they would really get off the rock and onto the Mainland someday: because as a matter of fact, it was well known that some had walked so carelessly as to lose their footing, and had fallen back into the stormy waters.

So these people used to meet and get as high on the rock as they could, and looking towards the Mainland (where they thought He was) they would cry out, "Come to us! Come and help us!" Yet all the while He was down (by His Spirit) among the poor struggling drowning creatures in the deep, with His arms reaching out to drag them to safety, and looking up, oh so longingly but in vain, to those on the rock, pleading with them, His voice hoarse from calling, 'Come to Me! Come, and help Me!'"

Jesus is down by the waters. He is among the multitudes! He is not among the high society in Christian City! Will we go to Him?

"You will see Me"

Some time back Michael Clark and I went to Casper, Wyoming, where we gathered with some of the street people and poor in a coffee house setting very reminiscent of the Jesus people movement of the 70s. The presence of the Lord was powerful in that room as they shared their stories of how Christ had set them free from a life of drugs, prostitution and a host of other vices. Then one young woman named Ruth (not her real name), shared with teary eyes how her husband had abused and abandoned her. She soon found herself destitute and on the streets. But one dear Christian woman Sarah (not her real name) who was sitting just across the room from us, saw Ruth's plight and opened her house and heart to her. For which Ruth was eternally grateful! Only moments later Sarah, who had so graciously taken this dear sister in off the streets and made her a part of her family, asked us to pray for her that she could find a ministry that she could "do for the Lord." Michael and I were astonished. What she had done for this dear, suffering woman was pure and undefiled ministry unto the Lord and she didn't even know it! "In as much as you have done it unto the least of these you have done it unto the Lord," we told her. "Ministry doesn't get any better than that!" Sarah

didn't realize that in ministering to Ruth in her distress, she was ministering to the Lord. Isn't it amazing how we often don't recognize the only ministry that Christ acknowledges as legitimate?

When Jesus was about to return to His Father, He said to His disciples, "I will not leave you orphans. I will come to you. Yet a little while, and the world will see me no more; but you will see Me" (John 14:18-19). Where and how would they see Jesus after He had returned to the Father? Just as Jesus promised, the Spirit of truth was sent after His ascension, which reveals Christ in our spirits, taking what belongs to Him and revealing it to us. This is glorious beyond words! But there is another way that Christ is seen by those who have spiritual eyes to see Him. The hearts of His disciples were troubled, for Jesus had been talking more and more about leaving them and coming again. His last continuous discourse with His disciples is recorded in Matthew chapter twenty-five. There Jesus taught His disciples about a most inconspicuous place where they would see him after His departure. It is as if he was saying to them "if you want to see me, this is where you will see me." Wherever could that place be? Let's listen in as Jesus explains.

"But when the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory. Before him all the nations will be gathered, and he will separate them one from another, as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then the King will tell those on his right hand, 'Come, blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry, and you gave me food to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave me drink; I was a stranger, and you took me in; naked, and you clothed me; I was sick, and you visited me; I was in prison, and you came to me.' "Then the righteous will answer him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry, and feed you; or thirsty, and give you a drink? When did we see you as a stranger, and take you in; or naked, and clothe you? When did we see you sick, or in prison, and come to you?' "The King will answer them, 'Most assuredly I tell you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.' Then he will say also to those on the left hand, 'Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire which is prepared for the devil and his angels; for I was hungry, and you didn't give me food to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave me no drink; I was a stranger, and you didn't take me in; naked, and you didn't clothe me; sick, and in prison, and you didn't visit me.' "Then they will also answer, saying, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry, or

thirsty, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and didn't help you?' "Then he will answer them, saying, 'Most assuredly I tell you, inasmuch as you didn't do it to one of the least of these, you didn't do it to me.' These will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life." (Matthew 25:31-46).

Jesus is seen in the least of these. Are we like the Christians in Booth's vision who climb as high on the rock as we can and cry out to Him, "Come to us! Come and help us"? Or do we hear and respond to His voice calling out to us from down in the ocean of suffering humanity, "Come to me, come and help me!"

It is Time to Repent

Yes, it is time to return to the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is time to return to His ministry! It is time we stop minding the bottom line, like the moneychangers in the temple, and welcome the Christ that is revealed in the least of these. It is time that those who claim to follow Jesus stopped minding high things and return to the faith of the lowly Christ, who condescended to men of low estate (Romans 12:16). "[It is better to be of a lowly spirit with the poor, Than to divide the plunder with the proud](#)" (Proverbs 16:19). It is time that we once again invite those who cannot reciprocate or pay us back to our feasts! (See Luke 14:12-14).

Do we practice this faith; the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, or do we ask the poor to stand in the corner while we give the seats of honor to the rich and influential? What makes us think that the faith of the lowly servant Christ, who came as the champion of the poor and needy, can now be facilitated by the high and mighty? To defile such precious faith with the gold of kings and the garb of ecclesiasticism is like putting a gold ring in a pig's nose. How dare we adorn the faith of the lowly Shepherd, who knelt in the servant apron and washed the feet of common fishermen, with the attire of kings and noblemen! For in doing so we desecrate the most precious faith to ever grace a fallen world and defile with gold and greed the sacrifice of Him who came to spend and be spent for all.

Said Christ our Lord, "I will go and see
How the men, my brethren, believe in me."
He passed not again through the gates of birth
But made himself known to the children of earth.

Then said the chief priests, and rulers, and kings,
"Behold now the Giver of all good things;
Go to, let us welcome with pomp and state
Him who alone is mighty and great."

With carpets of gold the ground they spread
Wherever the Son of Man should tread,
And in palace-chambers lofty and rare
They lodged him, and served him with kingly fare.

Great organs surged through the arches dim
Their jubilant floods in praise of him;
And in church, and palace, and judgment hall,
He saw his image high over all.

But still, wherever his steps they led,
The Lord in sorrow bent down his head,
And from under the heavy foundation-stones,
The son of Mary heard bitter groans.

And in church, and palace, and judgment hall,
He marked great fissures that rent the wall,
And opened wider and yet more wide
As the living foundation heaved and sighed.

"Have ye founded your thrones and altars, then,
On the bodies and souls of living men?
And think ye that building shall endure,
Which shelters the noble and crushes the poor?"

"With gates of silver and bars of gold
Ye have fenced my sheep from their Father's fold;
I have heard the dropping of their tears
In heaven these eighteen hundred years."

"O Lord and Master, not our the guilt,

We built but as our fathers built;
Behold thine images, how they stand,
Sovereign and sole, through all our land!"

The Christ sought out an artisan,
A low-browed, stunted, haggard man,
And a motherless girl, whose fingers thin
Pushed from her faintly want and sin.

These set he in the midst of them,
And as they drew back their garment-hem,
For fear of defilement, "Lo here," said he,
"The images ye have made of me!"

Poem by James Russell Lowell 1819-1891